

Every USC player deserves praise and recognition for their fine play on the field, but I would like to particularly point out the accomplishments of Heisman Trophy winner and Associated Press Player of the Year, quarterback Matt Leinert, who completed 18 of 35 passes for a total of 332 yards and set an Orange Bowl record with five touchdown passes. There were times when he could do no wrong and his play reminded me of a couple quarterbacks from my hometown team, the 49ers: Joe Montana and Steve Young.

Matt has also distinguished himself by announcing that he would return to school for his senior year, foregoing an opportunity to be the first pick in the National Football League draft. I wish more college athletes would follow his lead.

Ultimately, however, this was a team win featuring a high scoring offense and a tenacious defense. USC ranked in the top 10 in every defensive category and set a school record by scoring at least 20 points in the last 38 games.

Led by All-Americans Matt Leinert, tailback Reggie Bush, defensive tackle Shaun Cody, and linebacker Matt Grootegoed, USC brought much pride to the University and the Pacific Ten Conference.

Legions of Trojan fans across the country celebrated the victory and have already made plans for a return trip to the championship game in 2005.

And anyone who has seen a USC game over the past few years knows that another championship run is a strong possibility.

Let me also take a moment to congratulate the University of Oklahoma Sooners for their great season. They were a worthy opponent and a credit to the University and their State.

Years from now, as Americans engage in one of their favorite pastimes and debate the great college football teams of all-time, the 2004 University of Southern California Trojans will surely make the list. I congratulate the team once again for their incredible season and I look forward to watching them make another run at a championship next year.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to the outstanding accomplishments of the University of Southern California football team. Earlier this month, the Trojans completed a perfect season by winning the Orange Bowl and their second consecutive national championship.

Last year, USC shared the championship after being excluded from the Bowl Championship Series title game.

This year, there was no doubt. The Trojans won all 13 of their games and led both the Associated Press and the USA Today/ESPN coaches polls from the preseason through the bowl games.

On Tuesday, January 4, they ended the season with a bang. In a much-anticipated meeting with second-ranked Oklahoma, the Trojans overwhelmed the Sooners by a score of 55-19 to win the Orange Bowl and the national

championship in utterly convincing fashion.

I would like to congratulate USC President Steven B. Sample, Head Coach Pete Carroll, and the Trojan football team for an unforgettable season.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution and preamble be agreed to en bloc, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating thereto be printed in the RECORD, without intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 12) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 12

Whereas the University of Southern California Trojans football team won the 2004 Bowl Championship Series national championship game, defeating Oklahoma University by a score of 55 to 19 in the FedEx Orange Bowl at Pro Player Stadium in Miami, Florida, on January 4, 2004;

Whereas the University of Southern California Trojans football team has won 11 national championships;

Whereas the University of Southern California Trojans football team has won 34 Pacific 10 conference championships;

Whereas the University of Southern California Trojans football team has won 27 bowl games, only 2 games fewer than the University of Alabama;

Whereas the University of Southern California Trojans football team won 13 games during the 2004 season for the first time in the history of the school and became the first team since the University of Nebraska in 1994-1995 to repeat as Associated Press national champions and the second team to start and finish the season at number 1 in the Associated Press poll;

Whereas the University of Southern California Trojans football team has won 22 consecutive games;

Whereas the University of Southern California Trojans football team is ranked in the top 10 in every defensive category;

Whereas the University of Southern California Trojans football team has set a school record by scoring at least 20 points in its last 38 games;

Whereas Head Coach Pete Carroll has a record of 42 wins, 9 losses at the University of Southern California and is the second University of Southern California coach to win back-to-back national championships;

Whereas Heisman Trophy winner and Associated Press Player of the Year, quarterback Matt Leinert, completed 18 of 35 passes for a total of 332 yards and set an Orange Bowl record with 5 touchdown passes;

Whereas tailback Reggie Bush was a Heisman Trophy finalist and the winner of the Chic Harley award, presented annually to the College Football Player of the Year by the Touchdown Club of Columbus; and

Whereas quarterback Matt Leinert, tailback Reggie Bush, defensive tackle Shaun Cody, and linebacker Matt Grootegoed were named to the Associated Press All-American first team: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) commends the University of Southern California Trojans football team for winning the 2004 Bowl Championship Series national championship game; and

(2) directs the Secretary of the Senate to make available to the University of South-

ern California enrolled copies of this resolution for appropriate display;

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that immediately following the vote on the Rice nomination, the Senate remain in executive session and proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 5, the nomination of Jim Nicholson to be Secretary of Veterans Affairs; provided further that there be 30 minutes equally divided between the chairman and ranking member, and that at the expiration or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to a vote on the confirmation of the nomination, with no intervening action or debate; provided further that following the vote the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; provided further that following that vote, the Senate proceed to the consideration of the nomination of Michael Leavitt to be Secretary of Health and Human Services; that there be 2 hours of debate equally divided between the chairman and ranking members or their designees, and that following the use or yielding back of that time, the Senate proceed to a vote on the confirmation of the nomination, with no intervening action or debate.

Finally, I ask unanimous consent that the President then be notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LUGAR. I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on our side, I ask unanimous consent that the time for debate on the Leavitt nomination be divided as follows: Senator BAUCUS, 15 minutes; Senator DORGAN, 15 minutes; Senator STABENOW, 20 minutes; and Senator KENNEDY, 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair announces on behalf of the Committee on Finance, pursuant to section 8002 of title 26, U.S. Code, the designation of the following Senators as members of the Joint Committee on Taxation: the Senator from Iowa, Mr. GRASSLEY; the Senator from Utah, Mr. HATCH; the Senator from Mississippi,